

THE WHITE HOUSE

OFFICE OF FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

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**White House *Compassion in Action* Roundtable Highlights
Partnerships with Faith-Based and Community Organizations to
Combat Hunger at Home and Abroad**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) today convened a *Compassion in Action* policy roundtable, highlighting innovative policies and partnerships to alleviate hunger in the U.S. and abroad. Hosted by OFBCI Deputy Director Jedd Medefind and keynoted by U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Ed Schafer, today's event explored effective models for Federal collaboration with faith-based and community organizations to provide children and low-income individuals with access to food, a healthful diet and nutrition education.

"The USDA has a long history of work with faith-based and community groups to help those in need. These organizations play a vital role in fighting hunger because they know the clients, know neighborhoods, and know the needs," said Secretary of Agriculture Ed Schafer.

Convening policymakers, business leaders, philanthropists, government officials and others, today's *Compassion in Action* roundtable featured promising public-private partnerships with hunger relief organizations. Among the featured speakers discussing domestic projects were representatives from Angel Food Ministries, East Texas Food Bank and Catholic Charities USA. Leaders from International Orthodox Christian Charities, Planet Aid and World Vision focused on their actions to combat hunger overseas.

"American generosity is often at its best through the service of caring faith-based and community organizations that help address critical human needs like hunger," said OFBCI Deputy Director Jedd Medefind. "This Roundtable seeks to highlight, honor and grow the remarkable partnerships that are reducing hunger both at home and abroad."

Additionally, Secretary Schafer described innovative USDA programs to deliver food aid and humanitarian assistance to those in need both at home and abroad. For example, the Food and Nutrition Service ensures that low-income Americans, especially children, have access to healthy food and nutrition education at schools, day care facilities, and in their homes. Also, USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service works with a variety of organizations, including faith-based and community groups, to provide food aid around the world.

According to USDA, about 11 percent of all U.S. households faced hunger at some time during 2005. Since 2001, funding for nutrition assistance has increased by more than 50 percent, to \$59 billion, demonstrating the Bush Administration's unwavering commitment to help ensure Americans have access to Americans in need of healthy food and adequate nutrition.

The generosity of the American people is also addressing hunger overseas. In 2006 alone, the U.S. provided resources to help feed 70 million people in more than 50 countries through food aid, humanitarian assistance programs, and agricultural support to newly emerging democracies. Currently, the gap between recommended nutritional requirements and purchasing power of the populations in the world's poorest countries was more than 32 million tons in 2003.

President Bush's Faith-Based and Community Initiative (FBCI) is built from the conviction that the most effective way to address our communities' great needs is to draw upon the unique strengths of every willing community and faith-based partner. He launched the FBCI upon taking office in January 2001, to strengthen America's nonprofit sector and extend its work in partnership with government.

Since April 2006, the OFBCI has convened monthly *Compassion in Action* policy roundtables to discuss issues of interest faith- and community-based organizations and highlight honor the successes of dedicated Americans helping their neighbors in need.

For more information on the OFBCI and the President's compassion agenda, visit: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/>.

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